



Encounter Christ in the Sacrament

How is the Holy Spirit relevant today?

Just before ascending into Heaven, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come in His fullness. The Apostles did not want the Lord to leave them but Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth; it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” (John 16:7). Ten days later, Jesus kept His promise! On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down like fire from Heaven upon the Apostles and other disciples gathered with Mary (See Acts 2:1-4).

What does the coming of the Holy Spirit mean for us today?

On Pentecost, we see the signs of a mighty wind that filled the Upper Room and tongues as of fire that rested on the Apostles together with the women and Mary and the disciples, as they were filled with the Holy Spirit. (See Acts 2:1-4). As Jesus had commanded the Apostles to go forth and make disciples of all nations, they were now “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49), the needed power and presence of the Holy Spirit, strengthening them to overcome the fear that had seized them to the point of running away during Jesus’ passion and crucifixion. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Apostles went forth to teach, preach and baptize. The other disciples likewise went forth to bear witness to Jesus as the Son of God and our Savior.

We see that on Pentecost, the Catholic Church was publicly manifested. This work of the early Church is described in the Acts of the Apostles, which clearly portrays people such as Peter and Paul being strengthened and guided by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has remained with the Church ever since and will stay with her until the end of time.

The Solemnity of Pentecost is more than the celebration of an event. Above all, it is the celebration of a Person, the Person of the Holy Spirit. This Divine Person is the bond of love between the Father and the Son. A relationship with the Holy Spirit is necessary for all believers, and we develop it through quiet times of daily prayer, listening for His inner promptings and guidance.

The Holy Spirit comes to us in the Sacraments.

We receive the Holy Spirit through the Sacraments, and thereby we receive the total gift of God’s *Personified Love*. In Baptism there is a special outpouring of the Spirit as He dwells in our hearts; thus we become temples of the Holy Spirit. In Baptism we also receive the gifts of faith, hope, and charity, along with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the Sacrament of Confirmation these gifts are increased and we are given a special strength of

the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the Faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess His name boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross.

It is important that we know and understand how to use these supernatural gifts that can only come from God. We must all pray to grow stronger in each of these gifts, and to tap into them often. The following prayer asks Jesus for an increase of each of these gifts:

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who, before ascending into Heaven, did promise to send the Holy Spirit to finish Your work in the souls of Your Apostles and Disciples, please grant the same Holy Spirit, to perfect in my soul the work of Your grace and Your love. Strengthen in me the supernatural **Gift of Faith**, that I may truly believe in God and make my response by developing a relationship with Him. The **Gift of Hope**, that I may trust in God through difficult circumstances and know that He loves me infinitely. The **Gift of Charity**, that I may receive God’s love and give God’s love.

The **Gift of Knowledge**, that I may understand that there is a space reserved within me solely for the Holy Spirit. No thing or person can fill this space. God created me for Himself alone.

The **Gift of Piety**, that I know and love God as a son or daughter truly would. As members of the Family of God, we are brothers and sisters in Christ and therefore we must treat each other with deep respect. The **Gift of Fortitude**, that I may have the courage and strength to overcome the obstacles that would harm my relationship with Jesus. The **Gift of Understanding**, that I may realize that sin separates me from my friendship with Jesus. My heart is led to respond by repenting of my sin and receiving forgiveness in the Sacrament of Confession. The **Gift of Wisdom**, that I may be inspired to worship God and to love Him as my Heavenly Father: His love leads me to want to know and do what is right and good. The **Gift of Fear of the Lord**, that I may be filled with a loving reverence towards God and may avoid anything that may displease Him. The **Gift of Right Counsel**, that I may be able to make correct decisions about God’s will for my life.

Mark us dear Lord, with the sign of Your true disciples, and animate us in all things with Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

